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24 December 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chairman, United States Intelligence Board

SUBJECT: Operational Use of LIGHTNING BUG

REFERENCE: Memo from D/NRO to Chairman, USIB on
above subject, dated 13 December 1963;

1. This memorandum contains a recommendation in paragraph 4.

2. [] Executive Secretary of USIB, provided a copy of the reference to me. At the meeting of COMOR on 17 December and in pursuance of the second paragraph of the reference, I discussed with COMOR the need to prepare a recommendation for the Board to reaffirm the requirement for ELINT collection against the SA-2 missile system. I was advised by [] the NRO representative on COMOR, that the D/NRO had decided not to brief the COMOR on the improved LIGHTNING BUG until after he had briefed the Director of Central Intelligence some time in early January.

3. I would normally expect that COMOR would be briefed prior to any briefing of USIB on a matter directly related to a requirement for overhead reconnaissance. This would permit COMOR to complete its staff work, which in this instance would be reaffirmation of [] as the target or a recommendation for coverage of an alternate or even that there may be no substantive need at all at this time. It appears that in view of the D/NRO decision, this will not be possible.

4. Recommendation: If you wish COMOR to be ready with a recommendation for the Board by the time the Director is briefed, I recommend that you request Dr. McMillan to have COMOR briefed on the improved LIGHTNING BUG capability as soon as possible.

James Q. Reber

Chairman

Committee on Overhead Reconnaissance

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28 AUG 1963

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, National Reconnaissance Office

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SUBJECT: LIGHTNING BUG

1. After reviewing the situation in Cuba and the proposed Q2C Ryan (147B) drone equipped with ELINT collection equipment and labeled LIGHTNING BUG, on 13 December 1962 the United States Intelligence Board directed that LIGHTNING BUG be maintained in a state of reasonable readiness for future use. Since that time the Air Force has modified this drone, enhancing its altitude capacity and affording it an operational altitude above 60,000 feet. At the same time COMOR's requirements for ELINT against the SA-2 missile system have been reaffirmed in greater detail.

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3. On the shelf items presently exist which can be modified to accomplish all but the [] requirement. Equipment capable of satisfying the latter requirement is in the development stage and will be ready for installation in December.

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4. We are presently working in cooperation and coordination with Air Force on this system improvement and will inform the D/NRO when the system is operationally ready. Simultaneously, we plan to inform COMOR of the capability in order that COMOR can review the system against its requirements and support implementation of the operational concept at USIB and the Special Group.

(Signed) Jack C. Ledford

JACK C. LEDFORD
Colonel USAF
Director, Program B, NRO

cc: AFXOPR
Col. Lloyd Ryan

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